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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 8599

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (GARBA, JOSEPH)

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN PRESS REACTION TO JUNE 23 GARBA SPEECH IN CLEVELAND, OHIO

REF: LAGOS 7477

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

1. COVERAGE OF COMMISSIONER GARBA'S JUNE 23 CLEVELAND SPEECH HAS BEEN QUITE LIMITED. THE DAILY TIMES IN ITS "WORLD SPOTLIGHT" SECTION ON JUNE 30 HEADLINED "NIGERIA OPPOSES COLD WAR TACTICS:

INTERFERENCE IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS FLAYED - GARBA IN U.S." EMPHASIZED GARBA'S REJECTION OF ALL ATTEMPTS BY EITHER EAST OR WEST TO INTERFERE IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS AND UNDERSCORED HIS CRITICISM OF EFFORTS TO FORM A PAN-AFRICAN FORCE TO STABILIZE THE SITUATION IN SHABA. GARBA WAS QUOTED AS SAYING "WE NEED PEACE TO PURSUE OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WE DO NOT NEED SECURITY SOLUTIONS MANUFACTURED IN PARIS OR MOSCOW OR WASHINGTON OR LONDON." THE CORRESPONDENT NOTED GARBA'S REMARKS ON THE INCREASING WARMTH IN AMERICAN-AFRICAN RELATIONS BASED ON THE CHANGING U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD AFRICAN PROBLEMS. THE REPORT CLOSED WITH GARBA'S STATEMENT THAT JUST AS THE WEST ALLIED WITH THE USSR TO DEFEAT THE NAZI
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RACISTS IN WWII, AFRICANS HAVE NO "REGRETS" IN ACCEPTING SOVIET AID TO LIQUIDATE THE RACIST REGIME OF SOUTH AFRICA. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF THE SECTIONS OF THE SPEECH THAT DEALT WITH NIGERIAN-BLACK AMERICAN SOLIDARITY. ON JULY 1, THE DAILY TIMES RAN A FULL TRANSCRIPT OF THE SPEECH IN ITS CENTERFOLD.

2.THE ONLY OTHER COVERAGE WAS IN THE NIGERIAN CHRONICLE FROM

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CROSS RIVER STATE. THE CHRONICLE PRINTED AN EDITORIAL COMMENT ON GARBA'S ADDRESS ENTITLED "PAN-AFRICAN ARMY." WHILE AGREEING WITH THE COMMISSIONER'S CONDEMNATION OF THE "PAN-AFRICAN FORCE," THE EDITORIAL TAKES ISSUE WITH GARBA'S CONCLUSION THAT THE OAU IS COMPETENT TO SET UP SUCH A FORCE. THE REASONS FOR THIS STAND ARE THAT AN AFRICAN "INTERSENTIONIST FORCE" WOULD CERTAINLY

DEGENERATE INTO A REPRESSIVE ORGAN FOR SUSTAINING DICTATORIAL REGIMES IN AFRICA....AND THAT SUCH A FORCE WOULD BE USELESS EVEN AS A COUNTER TO THE MILITARY MUSCLES OF RACIST REGIMES IN AFRICA/"

3. COMMENT: AS FOR THE LACK OF EXTENSIVE COVERAGE MUST

BE THAT IN THE PERIOD SINCE THE ADDRESSEE NIGERIA'S PRESS HAS HAD TO REPORT A BUSY SCHEDULE OF INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC EVENTS. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S VISIT ON THE 26TH, NIGERIAN ARMY WEEK, THE DOCTORS' STRIKE, AND THE HEAD OF STATE'S CONTINUING VISITS TO THE STATES HAVE DOMINATED NEWS COVERAGE. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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4. THE EXAGGERATEDLY HOSTILE HEADLINES FOCUSED ON SHABA WHILE NIGERIAN-BLACK AMERICAN SOLIDARITY WHICH, ACCORDING TO PATRICK COLE, WAS THE AIM OF GARBA'S TRIP, WAS NOT MENTIONED. IN THIS CONNECTION, BRONSON DEDE SAID THE NIGERIANS WERE DISAPPOINTED CONFIDENTIAL

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WITH THE AUDIENCE. THEY THOUGHT THE BLACK PRESS REPRESENTATIVES WERE NOT INTERESTED IN THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE SPEECH BUT WERE CONCERNED ONLY WITH THEIR OWN PROBLEMS.
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